

The SWORD of the LORD

Edited by JOHN R. RICE.

"And they cried, The Sword of the Lord, and of Gideon." Judges 7:20

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A NEW YEAR, NEW START

By Evangelist John R. Rice

"And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there; and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother."—Gen. 35:1.

"And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord."—Jonah 3:1-3.

"I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father I have sinned..."—Luke 15:18.

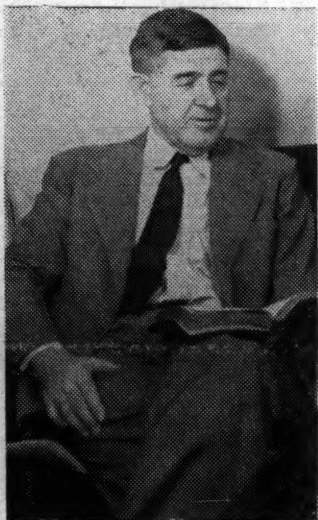
A new year is upon us. It is time to make a new start. I have no patience with the shallow argument that because we have made good resolutions before and have

failed to keep them, therefore we should not make New Year's resolutions. No man living ever did all he planned to do. No woman ever kept all her vows. But everyone who ever tried to do better was helped by it. People who try to do more than those who do not try. People who resolve to do more than those who not resolve. And however much you have failed in the past, the coming of the new year is an ideal time to start over again to live for God and to be what God wants you to be. The gospel of a second chance appears throughout the Bible.

Jacob Went Back to Bethel

Jacob, fleeing from his brother Esau, met God at Bethel. Asleep with his head on a pillow of stone, Jacob in a dream saw a ladder reaching to Heaven and angels of God ascending and descending. He arose and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not!" (Gen. 28:16).

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Dr. John R. Rice

"PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD"

By Dr. Robert G. Lee, Pastor

Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tennessee;
President Southern Baptist Convention

"Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel."—Amos 4:12.

"Therefore be ye ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."—Matt. 24:44.

Amos the prophet was God's thunder over Israel. His eyes and lips threw fire. The rich blanched as he excoriated them for "selling the poor for a pair of shoes"—for filling their hewn-stone houses with the spoil of robbery. "Hypocrites were in a funk before the altars" as he shouted, "I despise your feasts"—"at a time when the soul of religion had fled, when the outside of the cup was polished gold and the inside tarnished and foul."

Amos said — by the Holy Spirit: "Prepare to meet thy God."

Matthew the publican was a despised tax collector for the Romans. He was mastered by money until he was mastered by the Master. Though he was rich he was wretched—because the Romans despised him and the Jewish people hated him. He was a thief before he became an apostle. By the Holy Spirit he said, "Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matt. 24:44).

I. Inevitable Necessity

Some years ago the Grand Trunk line railroad, knowing the danger that ever threatened and the death that was inevitable when the massive juggernauts of steel and steam called trains came into collision with public or private vehicles at railroad crossings, offered a prize of twenty-five hundred dollars to the person who

would suggest the three best words to be used as warning words at railroad crossings. The person wise enough and fortunate enough to win the twenty-five hundred dollars offered these three words which you have often seen: "Stop; Look; Listen."

But these words, though they cost \$833.33 per word, avail nothing for the safety of those crossing railroads unless they are heeded — unless people stop, unless they look, unless they listen. Destroyed vehicles, mangled bodies, blood spattered along the right of way, the walls of those whose loved ones went to death in the wreck—all testify to the truth of this statement. What avails the word "STOP" if people will not stop? What protection does the word "LOOK" afford if people will not look? What warning does the word "LISTEN" give if people will not listen?

A thousand bottles of medicine have no efficacy for healing your body unless the medicine is taken. An apothecary's shop holds not enough medicine to kill a single germ or to ease a single pain un-

less the medicine is taken. A man can die of starvation at a banquet table loaded with meats and fruits unless he eats. Uneaten food is impotent — and as worthless as painted food. A man can freeze in a blizzard although he owns a hundred fur coats unless he wears the clothes, for no warmth can come from clothes unworn. A man can die of thirst in the midst of a thousand gushing fountains of pure water unless he drinks, for water hot swallowed is as worthless as photographed water. A lifeboat will save no man from drowning if he will not get into the lifeboat. In the days of Moses and Joshua a man had to enter the cities of refuge or they were

(Continued on page 3)



Dr. Robert G. Lee

Why Christians Believe in Everlasting Punishment

By Henry J. Van Dyke, D.D.

(Preached in Clinton Street Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn, 1878.)

"Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins."—John 8:21, 24.

How do we account for the fact that the future everlasting punishment of those who die impenitent and unforgiven has been firmly held and strenuously defended by the great majority of Christians in every age? The doctrine is confessedly awful and repulsive. It has been assailed by every weapon of ridicule, of denunciation and of argument. It has been stigmatized as unreasonable, cruel and dishonoring to God. They who teach it have been held up to public scorn as "narrow-minded bigots," "heartless theologians," "Pharasaic dogmatists." Christianity itself has often been rejected because of it. And yet after eighteen centuries of investigation, discussion and controversy, this confessedly offensive and horrible doctrine enters as an essential element into the creed of the whole Christian Church, of the Greek, of the Latin, and of all the great historical Protestant bodies. It underlies and pervades, in some form, the religious experience, the hymnology and the liturgies of the great mass of Christians.

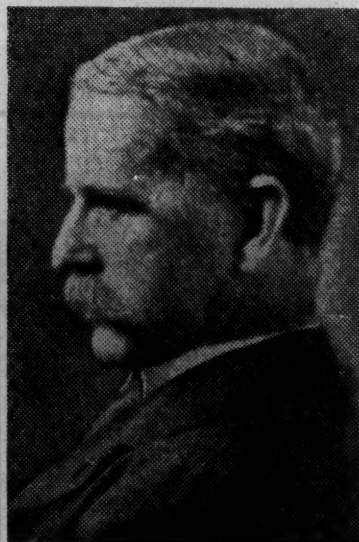
Its opponents among professing

Christians belong exclusively to one of two classes—those who refuse to adopt any definite statements of religious belief, or those who are confessedly out of sympathy with the denominations to which they belong. The doctrine of future punishment is one of the points in regard to which there is no characteristic difference between Roman Catholics and Protestants. As it prevailed in the church before the rise of the Romish hierarchy, so also it was not brought into question when the Reformation struck off the chains of priestly power, and led men in the free exercise of the right of private judgment to the study of the Scriptures. While all the Lutheran and Reformed creeds reject the comparatively modern dogma of purgatory, they reaffirm the ancient faith of the church in future everlasting punishment. The popular notion that this doctrine has some peculiar connection with the Presbyterian church, or at least with what is called the Calvinistic system, is utterly groundless. Two facts will demon-

(Continued on page 6)

73,500 copies
THE SWORD OF THE LORD
Printed this issue

Henry Van Dyke, professor of English literature at Princeton University and author, was a Bible-believing gospel preacher, once pastor of Brick Presbyterian Church, New York City, died in 1933.



Henry J. Van Dyke, D.D.

Subscription Campaign Closes February 1

By the Editor

Ten \$1, 8 Month Subscriptions, Bring 441-Page Book, *The Power of Pentecost*, Free.

Two \$1 Subscriptions Bring 79-Page Book, *Speaking With Tongues*, By John R. Rice, Free.

Two \$1 Subscriptions Bring Box of 200 Scripture Promise-Box Cards, Scripture and Poem on Each, for Family Worship, Private Devotions, Scripture Memorizing, Free.

Two \$1 Subscriptions Bring Beautiful Christian Calendar With Scripture on Beautiful Scene for Each Month, Size 7 1/4 x 12, Free.

As of December 19 we have received over 30,000 paid subscriptions to THE SWORD OF THE LORD in the D. L. Moody Memorial Campaign. This is amazing, wonderful. Yet with normal expirations we still need a good many thousand subscriptions to reach our goal—75,000 paid subscriptions. Hence we are extending the campaign. It will definitely close midnight February 1. That gives a little over four weeks to get in thousands more subscriptions.

We have extended our offer. You can still get an 8 months' (35 weeks') subscription to THE SWORD OF THE LORD for only \$1.

For \$10 worth of such subscriptions, you may still get free the large 441-page book by the editor, *The Power of Pentecost*, or *The Fullness of the Spirit*. This is a regular \$3 value given free with \$10 worth of subscriptions at the bargain rate.

We have offered the following

extra premiums:

For \$2 worth of subscriptions, we will send absolutely free the new book, *Speaking With Tongues*, 79 large pages. This is a part of the big book, *The Power of Pentecost*, but now printed separately for those who want it. The price is 35c, or it is sent absolutely free with \$2 worth of subscriptions.

For \$2 worth of subscriptions, you may have absolutely free a box of 200 precious promise cards, each one with Scripture and poem. They are very, very popular for family or private devotions. Have each one around the table draw a card, read the verse and poem. They are valuable for private devotions, for memorizing Scripture. Value, 50c, but free for \$2 worth of subscriptions.

For two subscriptions, you may have a beautiful Christian calendar with twelve photographic scenes picturing differing seasons, each one lettered beautifully

(Continued on page 2)

"YE SHALL BE MY WITNESSES—UNTO THE UTTERMOST PART OF THE EARTH"

Japan Field

The Scandinavian Alliance Mission

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San Francisco, California
December 5, 1949

Evangelist John R. Rice
Wheaton, Illinois

Dear Brother Rice:

It has been my privilege to distribute thousands of your tract, "What Must I Do to Be Saved?" here in Japan. Today when I asked Brother Tim Pietsch for a few thousand more tracts, he informed me that the supply in Japanese has been exhausted.

We have been helping the Japanese Christian workers sell New Testaments, the entire price of about 10 cents U.S. which goes to the local congregation for expansion of their work for Christ. In these New Testaments we have been placing one of your tracts. In one week recently we sold 2,400 New Testaments. We held meetings in one University, three high schools and many open air services. In one school alone we sold 415 New Testaments.

I have another intensive effort planned for a week in North Japan and wanted a supply of your tract to be given with the Testaments. God has wonderfully blessed this tract. We recently received through the mail two signed decision cards saying that these young people received Christ as a result of reading the tract that we had given them at a street meeting. I know of one young man that uses this tract in personal work. He reads it to his friends, asks them to accept Christ and sign the decision card. He has already lead more than 30 of his friends to make decisions for Christ through this method.

Now I feel that to take this tract out of print at this critical time would be a great pity. Japan is almost 100 per cent literate. Literature is one of the most effective methods of reaching souls for Christ here. I am enclosing my personal check for \$25.00 toward reprinting this tract that has been so widely used of God. Perhaps other Christian friends in America would assist in making it possible for us to have the continued and unhampered use of this fine method of winning the lost.

It has been my privilege to pray for you for years. Your ministry has been a blessing to my soul. May God continue to bless and use your ministry through the printed page and in your evangelistic efforts.

Gratefully yours in Christ,

—Fred D. Jarvis—

HOLDING FAST THE FAITHFUL WORD. THUS 1:10.

HOLDING FORTH THE WORD OF LIFE. Phil. 2:15

God's message of love

Sent down from above

Take it wherever you go.

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1934 Ichome, Tamagawa Todoroki
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December 5, 1949

Dr. John R. Rice
214 West Wesley
Wheaton, Illinois

Beloved Dr. Rice:

Greetings from Japan in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Phil. 3:20.

Haven't heard from you in such a long time and have been wondering if you have received my last letters telling you of the great blessing your tract, "What Must I Do to Be Saved?" has been here in Japan. Now the 2nd printing has been completed and is exhausted. For the five hundred dollars you sent we were able to print 64,500 copies.

Recently with Mr. Kunz, executive director of the Pocket Testament League and Dr. Frizen, we made a trip to Hokkaido. While there we were interviewed by the owner of the largest newspaper for the island of Hokkaido, and in his paper he published an account of the PTL object in its work in Japan and asked if any who had not yet read the Bible—if they would like a free copy of the Gospel of John to write us a postcard. The response has been tremendous and literally thousands have sent us post cards asking for copies of the PTL Gospel of John. I will enclose a copy for you to see what we are distributing.

Since it is PTL's policy to distribute the Word with a message from the Word, we have taken the liberty of enclosing for each one who asks for a gospel one of your "What Must I Do to Be Saved?" so that the supply is now completely exhausted. Also we have shared your tracts with other missionaries of the Evangelical Alliance Mission and other groups.

Would it be possible to have a third publication of "What Must I Do to Be Saved?" I would be most happy to help in any way to continue the publication work.

God has given wonderful opportunities and it has been my privilege to preach in the Japanese language in most of the large Universities of Tokyo. Yesterday afternoon I preached in the open air to a crowd of about ten thousand. We have seen some wonderful conversions. The young man who led 47 of his classmates to Christ through the use of your tract is growing in the Lord.

Yours because His

APPROVED BY THE POCKET TESTAMENT LEAGUE, INTERNATIONAL, OF LONDON, ENGLAND

Timothy Pietsch

\$1,000 Needed to Print "What Must I Do To Be Saved?" In Japan

By the Editor

Most readers of THE SWORD OF THE LORD know that we have sent \$700 or \$800 for printing booklets, "What Must I Do to Be Saved?" in Japanese, in Japan, under the direction of our brother, Timothy Pietsch, long-time Japanese missionary, who formerly worked with the Scandinavian Alliance Mission, now works with the Pocket Testament League. The Pocket Testament League, at the earnest invitation of General Douglas MacArthur, is striving to distribute 10 million Testaments and Bibles in Japan in three years, one million of them this year. The decision form which I have used in my little booklet, "What Must I Do to Be Saved?" has been printed in the Pocket Testament League Testament being distributed in Japan. And a number of the missionaries, as well as the Pocket Testament League, have been giving out this booklet. 114,500 copies have been printed and distributed. Now they are out.

Be sure to read carefully the two letters which are reproduced on this page. Brother Timothy Pietsch says that the supply of booklets has been exhausted, that the last \$500 we sent paid for 64,500. Doors are open to universities and people everywhere are hungry for the Word of God. One young man led forty-seven of his classmates to Christ through this booklet, "What Must I Do to Be Saved?"

Note the other letter from Missionary Fred D. Jarvis of the Scandinavian Alliance Mission. He

sends \$25 as a personal gift to reprint the booklet, "What Must I Do to Be Saved?," tells of one young man who has led thirty of his friends to make a decision for Christ.

We cannot leave this work unfinished. Here is an open door. We will plan to send at least \$1,000 as quickly as we can to Japan for the reprinting of this booklet. If we had \$2,000 we could well afford to spend it in this white harvest field, getting out the gospel. Most people in Japan can read. Their hearts are hungry. Shintoism has been proven a failure. Oh, may God help us to win many thousands to Christ while hearts are tender!

If you can send a gift for printing the booklet, "What Must I Do to Be Saved?" in Japanese for free distribution in Japan, let us hear from you. For every gift we will send a receipt. This is a nonprofit corporation, and the government has approved The Sword of the Lord Foundation as free from Federal income tax. So gifts to THE SWORD OF THE LORD may be deducted from taxable income up to fifteen per cent of your total income.

Invest in souls! Help us send money for a great new printing of this booklet which God has blessed.

Send all gifts to the Free Literature Fund, Sword of the Lord Publishers, 214 West Wesley Street, Wheaton, Illinois. God will reward you and we will be deeply grateful in His name.

Dr. Bob Jones Says:

In Bob Jones University, there are 29 young people who are preparing to be missionaries in India, 36 in Europe, 59 in Africa, 98 in South America, 60 in China, and 62 in Japan. There are a large number who are missionary volunteers but who are not certain about the field to which they feel the Lord would have them go. A good percentage of these young people who are preparing for missionary work, as well as a good percentage of the young men who are preparing for the ministry, have to have some financial assistance in order to attend Bob Jones University and prepare for the foreign mission field or for the Gospel ministry in the homeland. Our Christian friends who are interested in missions at home and abroad and who are interested in the salvation of lost souls can help us help, not only these students but many others who would like to attend Bob Jones University and prepare for full-time Christian work, by contributing to the million-dollar Student Loan Endowment Fund which we are endeavoring to raise. This statement should appear in the paper the last week of 1949. We are asking all of you Christians who read this article to make up your minds to help

us with some contribution in the year 1950. One young man has written us that he will send one dollar a week. Some people send a contribution every month. Some prefer to make their gifts in just one lump sum. I am sure that every person who reads this article can either make a contribution himself or can get someone else to make a contribution. It would be wonderful if in 1950, we could raise the entire million dollars. Our students will contribute this school year about \$50,000; so we are sure that by the close of the school year, we will have a little more than one-fourth of what we need of the million dollars. If all of you Christian friends who read this statement will make some contribution to the million-dollar Student Loan Endowment or get someone else to make a contribution, we will be able to get the million dollars for which we have been asking and praying by January 1, 1951. Please ask God what He would have you do; and if He leads you to make some gift, be sure to make it. Please ask your friends to make a contribution. Thank you and God bless you.

BOB JONES, Founder
Bob Jones University
Greenville, S. C.

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(Continued from page 1)
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Our friends have wonderfully stood by the Lord in this matter. Will you send 15,000 more subscriptions right away? What a wonderful opportunity of doing good!

Send subscriptions at once to Sword of the Lord Publishers, 214 West Wesley Street, Wheaton, Illinois.

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A NEW YEAR, NEW START

(Continued from page 1)

So he vowed that if God would be with him and feed him and clothe him, and bring him to his father's house in peace, that the Lord should be his God, that he would surely give a tenth of all his income. (Gen. 28:22).

In the next score of years, Jacob had his ups and downs; he gained property and grew a great family; but one of his wives, at least, worshipped idols, and his Daughter Dinah was ruined by young prince Shechem, and two of his sons in murderous rage assassinated the entire male population of a city. People all about turned against Jacob.

Then to backslidden Jacob came the command of God—he was to go back to Bethel! "Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went" (Genesis 35:2,3). So the family did away with their idols, and with chastened hearts and clean garments they went back to Bethel and made a new start!

Jonah Got a Second Chance to Preach

Jonah was a terrible "flop" as a Christian. When God commanded him to go and preach to the great city of Nineveh Jonah rebelled and ran away from God. At Joppa he paid his fare on a ship and embarked on a voyage to a far country. But God prepared a storm; the troubled sailors seeking to appease God woke up sleeping Jonah and asked him to call upon his God. Jonah confessed his rebellion and had the sailors cast him into the sea to stop the storm. God had prepared a great fish which swallowed Jonah, and oh, what penitent praying Jonah did in the belly of that fish!

Then at last the whale disgorged Jonah at the coast. The Lord Jesus believed this story and authenticated it when he said, "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly: so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. 12:40). Therefore I have no trouble in believing it (nor anything else that God has said).

But to Jonah, far from home, whipped and ashamed, the word of the Lord came a second time, saying, "Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee." And this time "Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord" (Jonah 3:3). That greatest city of antiquity repented! The king and his nobles put on sackcloth and sat in ashes. The people repented of their sins and God spared the wicked city. He had planned to destroy! Jonah got his second chance to preach. Nineveh repented, got its second chance at life itself.

Moses, After Forty Years in the Desert, Made a New Start to Deliver Israel

Moses knew what it was to make a new beginning in the service of the Lord. As a hot-headed man of forty, Moses, reared as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, decided to cast his lot with his people, the Hebrews. He killed one Egyptian oppressor and thought to deliver his people. (Exod. 2:12). But the time was not ripe; the Jews themselves turned against him and Moses fled to the desert of Midian where he spent forty long, disconsolate years. And then, wonder of wonders, God spoke to him through the burning bush and sent the seasoned and ripened Moses to deliver his people. Moses made a new start and this time succeeded.

Thank God for the doctrine of a second chance!

Samson, the Profligate, Blind, Imprisoned Giant, Had God's Spirit Upon Him Again

Samson, too, knew what it meant to make a new start for God. Samson's birth was foretold by an angel. (Read Judges, chapters 13 through 16). He became wonderfully filled with the Spirit of God to judge Israel. With his hands he rent a lion and killed him as if he had been a kid, and at one time killed thirty men of the Philistines, and at another time a thousand fell under the flailing jawbone of an ass in his hand. He carried off the city gate of Gaza in his strength and nothing could withstand him when the Spirit of God came upon him.

But Samson did not always honor God. He visited a harlot in Gaza. Later he loved Delilah and finally told her of the secret of his strength, of his Nazarite vow and his long hair. Delilah cut off his hair as he slept with his head in her lap; the Spirit of God departed from him, and his power was gone. The Philistines put out his eyes and bound him to turn a mill like a donkey, walking round and round.

There poor, sightless, captive Samson turned his heart back to God. His hair began to grow again. And when Samson was brought to the house of idols to make sport for the Philistine people, he called on God and said, "O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes" (Judges 16:28). God was with him, the heathen temple fell down when the two center columns were pulled down, "So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life" (Judges 16:30). Samson died gloriously with the power of God upon him, after he had made a new start for God.

Peter, After Cursing, Denying Christ and Quitting the Ministry Made a New Start

Simon Peter came to the most disastrous fall of any man mentioned in the New Testament. After being the chief of the apostles, his courage failed him, when Jesus was arrested. He cursed and swore and denied Jesus publicly and then went away and wept bitterly. His heart was broken over his cowardice, over his shameful surrender to temptation and over the ruin of his testimony. Grief filled his heart over the way he had treated the beloved Lord Jesus. He seemed to lose all his faith. He planned to quit the ministry. He went back to fishing for a living.

But at the Sea of Galilee Jesus met him again. Jesus caused the empty nets to be filled with fish, cooked breakfast for the disciples, and then sent the humbled apostle again to "feed my sheep" and "feed my lambs." In a few days more Simon Peter was ready to preach at Pentecost—yea, ready to live and ready to die for the Lord Jesus. How blessed that Peter made a new start! How wonderful that the Lord Jesus had been praying for him all the time, never did give him up, did not let Satan have him! How wonderful that God gives us poor Christians another chance when we fail Him.

Prodigal Son Proves Anybody Can Start Over

The story of the prodigal son is the story of a man who started over again—that wild lad who went away from home proudly, who wasted his substance with riotous living and came to rags and hunger and a hog pen, at last "came to himself." He recalled that "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" He resolved, "I will arise and go to my father and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee. And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." And then and there, "He arose, and came to his father" (Luke 15:17-20). That story has the happiest ending of all the "really, truly" stories in the world. The father ran to meet him, met him with the kiss of forgiveness, brought for him a new robe, a ring, and shoes for the bruised feet, and killed the fatted calf. The boy who was lost was now found. He who was dead was now alive! The poor prodigal boy was now at home and loved and happy again. Here again is the doctrine of a second chance.

How a Sinning Christian is to Make a New Start

The year that is gone has been a sad and miserable year for many. 1949 has been a year of dread of war and trouble, outwardly; to many a Christian it has been a year of defeat, or surrender to temptation, a year of powerlessness, of self-will, of backsliding. Oh, with the approach of the new year, make a new start! Come back to the Father and start over again!

In I John 1:9 is a blessed promise so good for the new year, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Any backslidden Christian, any wayward child of God, any converted person who has lost his joy and assurance and the sweet consciousness of God's favor, can simply confess his sins to God and have them all wiped out in a moment! This is part of the contract we entered into with God at Calvary. God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse every erring one who confesses his sin.

In Proverbs 28:13 we are told, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Oh, reader, admit your failures! Uncover your backsliding! Confess how far you have missed God's way, God's best. And with that honest confessing, that penitent uncovering of your sins, there will come sweet forgiveness and mercy, a new cleansing and blessing.

The fifty-first Psalm is the prayer of David confessing his sin with Bathsheba, asking for a new pouring-out of the Holy Spirit on him, promising that he would win souls if God would renew a right spirit within him and forgive his sins. Many of us need to pray the same prayer today.

Oh, well I know that many readers at this New Year's time do not look back on a year of drunkenness and adultery and thievery. Your sins, perhaps, are not as coarse and obvious as that. Thousands of us, rather, have found our love grown cold. We have had too little of the Spirit's power. The fruit we have borne has been too little. How we preachers and Christian workers do need to make a new start!

The Psalmist exults, "I shall be anointed with fresh oil" (Psa. 92:10). Surely that is what all of us need for the new year. I know I need it and by God's grace I

intend to have it. "I shall be anointed with fresh oil!" At Pentecost there was a mighty pouring-out of the Spirit. "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:4). A few days later trouble came and there was a new need, a new problem, a new burden. So the disciples gathered together in prayer again; "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." (Acts 4:31).

Notice these nine words from Acts 2:4 describing Pentecost, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."

Notice the same nine words in Acts 4:31 describing a later experience of the same people: "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."

Oh, we can have again all the fullness and blessing we ever had. Yea, we can have more. Let us resolve this holy resolve; let us make this holy vow; let us take upon this holy obligation—"I will not go into 1950 and through it without the manifold power of the Holy Spirit upon me!" Let me make a new start, have a new dedication, a new surrender and a new empowering and anointing of the Spirit of God.

Lost Sinner, Start 1950 By Trusting Christ For Salvation

Perhaps you are an unconverted, lost sinner. Perhaps you never received Christ as your personal Saviour, never were born again. Then the only way you can make a new start that will please God is to repent of your sins and once and for all, take Christ as your own Saviour. Let Him come into your heart, forgive your sins and save your soul. Let Him make you God's own dear child. Will you do it today?

You see, quitting your drink is not enough. Possibly you cannot quit it alone; possibly you can. But what God wants is a start in the heart and not merely in the habit. Instead of just quitting your cursing or quitting your smoking, God wants you to quit your rebellion against Christ! He wants you to change from Satan's side to God's side in your heart. He wants you to be not a Christ-rejecter but a Christ-accepter. Oh, lost sinner, all you need to do is to turn in your heart to trust in Jesus Christ as your own Saviour. He will do everything you need if you only surrender to Him and trust Him for forgiveness.

Decision For Everybody!

Probably every reader ought to take some definite stand in your

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heart, make some definite new start for God before you lay this paper down. I suggest that you look over the following three statements to see which of them you can honestly sign. Check that square now. Then sign it. Then write me in your own words, or copy the decision which you have signed today; how glad I will be!

Date _____
Evangelist John R. Rice, Editor
THE SWORD OF THE LORD
Wheaton, Illinois
Dear Brother Rice:

Today I honestly make the New Year's decision which is checked below:

☐ 1. I am a backslider. I have been previously converted but have drifted into sin and worldliness and lost my joy and assurance. Today I confess to God my backsliding, and renew my vows. I trust Christ to forgive me and help me live for Him, out-and-out, in 1950.

☐ 2. I am a Christian but I confess that I am not filled with the Holy Spirit: I have not been the fruitful soul winner I ought to be in 1950. I have not had the warm-hearted love for God and His Word I should have had. I am saved, but I have not paid the price for power that I ought to pay. Here and now I confess my lack of power and come to God for a new anointing. I set out to seek His face daily, to confess every known sin, to surrender to every known will of His, confidently expecting that He will anoint me with the power of the Holy Spirit for a happier, more fruitful life in 1950.

☐ 3. I am a poor lost sinner who has never before been converted. Here and now I confess my sin to God. With penitent heart I ask His forgiveness and mercy. Today I trust Jesus Christ to forgive all my sins and save my soul, and I claim Him now as my Saviour. By His grace I will try to be known as a child of God from this day, and to live for Him.

SIGNED _____

ADDRESS _____

"Prepare to Meet Thy God"

(Continued from page 1)

worthless. A fish can die near an ocean of water if it does not get into the water. If he does not breathe a man can die of suffocation in a valley filled with air.

The Cross will be your condemnation unless you flee to the Cross. Jesus is the Way—the only Way. In the economy of redemption Christ is all and in all. He is our only Advocate and Mediator. "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." "There is none other name given under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved." You must meet God. All must. Rich. Poor. Wise. Ignorant. All. You can avoid worship services—you cannot avoid God. You can dodge the preacher—you cannot dodge God. You can deceive men and yourself—you cannot deceive God. You can laugh at God now—and God will laugh at your calamity and mock when your fear cometh.

"I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me."—Prov. 1:26-28.

You can deny that there is a hell—and you will have all eternity in hell in which to regret the folly of such unbelief. You can ridicule

spiritual religion until it has no place in your life. You cannot ridicule God so that He has no last word to say.

Note the—
II. Simplicity of These Words
"Prepare." Simply plain that word.

"Be Ready." Plainly simple those two words.

This text is no mystery to anybody. It is no enigma. It is no translation of some foreign language. It is no problem in mathematics. It is not something deducible by logic. It is no crossword puzzle — no reading of ancient sign language. It is no de-

(Continued on page 4)

SERMONS BY JOHN L. BRAY

1. The Prodigal Son.
2. Leaving Egypt.
3. If Jesus Should Come Today!
4. Soul-Winning.
5. Why Should We Win Souls?
6. "How Shall We Escape If We Neglect So Great Salvation?"
7. The Greatest Question.
8. The Two Roads.
9. A Day of Judgment.
10. Heaven When We Die!
11. Some Scriptural Certainties.
12. Jesus or Barabbas?
13. The Comfort of Heaven.
14. Hell—God's Penitentiary for Sinners.
15. What Must I Do To Be Saved?
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"Prepare to Meet Thy God"

(Continued from page 3)

ciphering of hieroglyphics — no elimination of some technicality. It is no darkening of counsel by words without knowledge. It is no question before which one stands baffled. It is no profundity beyond our mental reach. It is no sign-board one cannot read. It is no geometrical theorem. All know what it means.

It is not like Dr. Johnson's definition of the term "network": "Anything reticulated or decussated with interstices at equal distances between the intersections."

Men cannot escape by pleading ignorance. "As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law" (Rom. 2:12). The law of this text is very simple. Any lawyer will tell you that—

(1) Words of law are to be understood in their ordinary sense.

(2) Where law is uncertain there is no law.

(3) A law when it expresses one thing excludes everything else. Yes, this text is so plain. What it means is as clearly seen as a path of tar across a field of snow — its meaning is as easily understandable as starlight in the sky is seeable on a clear night.

Yet, though these words are plain and simple, they are seemingly misunderstood. People prepare for everything and are ready for everything except death and to meet God — except getting ready to be ready for the coming of the Son of Man. They get ready to marry. They get ready to go into business. They get ready for college. They get ready for vacation trips. They get ready for athletic contests. They get ready for political elections. They get ready to have a "nest egg" for the rainy day of old age. They get ready for everything except the most important thing on earth — the most important thing in time and in eternity, in life and in death.

III. The Christian and the Sinner and the Saved and the Unsaved Meet God

(1) For the Christian to meet God is thrillingly joyful and joyfully thrilling — like coming from the region of mournful monotones of jangling inharmonies into the realm of the sweetest concord of sounds, like coming from the dungeons rimmed with grinning skulls to a garden where radiant lilies bloom, like coming from the mad whirlings of a wild maelstrom to the calm of a peaceful harbor. It is a blessed, encouraging, sweet experience — like coming out of dread darkness into welcome light, out of sore bondage into glorious liberty, out of long sieges of sickness into eternal health, out of "the fear and dread of the tomb into the light and joy of God's home," out of the shame of the stocks to the glory of the throne, out of the horrors of inquisition torture racks to the soft caress of loving hands, out of the slime of the sewer to the serenity of the Spirit-lit sanctuary. To meet God "with lamps all trimmed and burning bright," with the garments "washed white in the blood of the Lamb" is like the blessedness of the hunter home from the hills, the sailor home from stormy seas, the soldier home from hard warfare. For the unsaved man to meet Christ unprepared is far more terrible than it was for the Czar of Russia when the Soviet

guard opened the door of his palace bedroom at five o'clock one morning and said, "You are to die in two hours" — yes, more terrible by far than the hour when, as ruler of the Russians, he received Russian bullets in his breast. But for the saved man to meet Christ is more delightful and more blessed than it was for Bonivard when the Swiss soldiers entered the dungeon where he had been chained to a pillar for six years and said "Bonivard, you are free."

(2) For the unsaved to meet God is a terrible time — a horror-filled hour when men and women would "say to the mountains, Fall on us . . . and to the hills, Cover us" (Luke 23:30). What a solemn thing for the unsaved to meet God unprepared — to have no refuge when judgment thunders boom and judgment lightnings flash and judgment verdicts are rendered! What a sad thing to be unready to meet the Son of Man should He come in such an hour as ye think not!

It was a terrible hour for Nadab and Abihu when "there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord" (Lev. 10:2). It was a sad hour for "those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land" and "died by the plague before the Lord" (Num. 14:37). It was a despairing hour for King Saul on Mount Gilboa as these words from Scripture testify:

"Then said Saul unto his armourbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armourbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it."—1 Sam. 31:4.

It was a tragic hour for Absalom, without blemish from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet, when he "rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak" and when Joab "took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak" (II Sam. 18:9 and 14). It was a terrible hour for King Uzziah when, by the retributive providence and power of God, he became a leper as white as snow and was thrust out from the palace to a pesthouse with its lonely isolation.

Ghastly gruesome for King Herod was the hour when the worms ate him. Terrible was the hour when Samson, in the hands of the Philistines, had his eyes punched out.

But all the terrors and depairs and tortures that ever beset the hearts and lives of men put into one reality of horror cannot equal the dread and horror that will possess the hearts of all who, when death comes, are not prepared to meet God or who are found in unreadiness when the Son of Man cometh.

Years ago a man in Virginia, loving a paramour more than he loved the wife of his bosom, took his wife, the mother of a three-week-old baby, for a ride. Before starting on the ride he bought fifteen cents' worth of candy and hid a shotgun in the automobile. Taking his wife several miles from the city, he shot her to death with the shot gun. With his wife's bloody body in the car, he then drove back to the city and told the authorities he had a fight with a highwayman and that the highwayman had killed his wife. His story was doubted. He was arrested. He was indicted. He was brought to trial. In the course of the trial, the prosecuting lawyer said, "Gentlemen of the jury, if you do not find this man guilty of the murder of his wife, you ought to dig up the bones of all the criminals in Virginia and apologize to them the remainder of your days."

Henry Clay Beattie was guilty. Found guilty, he confessed his guilt. He was sentenced to die in the electric chair. On the day of his execution, his head was shaved. Slippers were put on his bare feet. The leg of his trousers was slit. He

was led toward the death room. As he entered and saw in the weird glow the electric chair with one little red light glaringly glowing above it, he stopped quickly and turned pale. Then, pushed a bit by the guards, he ambled to the chair and sat down. He was strapped in. The contact was made. His body jerked and stiffened — and limbered, while the air was heavy with smell of burnt flesh, and thin wisps of smoke, like imps from hell, seemed to dance above the chair. For this man that was a terrible hour. But as sweet as moving amid dew-wet flowers in a garden when birds sing and lovers walk is that hour in comparison with the hour when the unprepared sinner meets God.

(3) It is a serious matter and foolish and sinful to count God out. Ahab did it — and the dogs licked his blood. Judas did — and the buzzards ate him. Gehazi did — and leprosy befouled him. King Saul did — and suicide closed the book of such strange lights and weird shadows. Jezebel did — and the dogs ate her. Athaliah did — and she died under heavy axes in the barn yard. Tom Paine, trying to drown the Bible in infidel ink, did it — and the midnight closed life's little day. Napoleon, weaving from the crimson threads of the French Revolution the fabric of a world empire, did it — and, on St. Helena, believing that his vanished splendor was only a dream, died — "a chained Prometheus, the world exultant at his fall." Zedekiah did — and he saw his own sons killed and his own eyes were put out by his enemies, and he died in fetters in Babylon. Belshazzar did — and a sleeveless hand wrote his doom in unforgettable letters on the wall, while the blood of the slain mingled with the wine of the feast. Nebuchadnezzar did — and "his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen" (Dan. 5:21).

Many others, foolishly and wickedly walking in the counsel of the ungodly, have missed eternal life and heaven. As death overtakes you, judgment will find you. There is nothing surer in God's universe than that. In 1886, Captain Arknight and three companions fell into a crevice of Mount Blanc. In 1897, thirty-one years afterwards, the captain's body was found. The pink was still on his cheeks. His watch, his knife and his keys were just as they were when he made the fatal plunge. As death met him so his discoverers found him. As death meets you, judgment will find you.

IV. The Possibility of Readiness

The fact that God asks us to prepare shows that preparation to meet Him is not an impossibility — not something beyond our comprehension and ability. God never asks us to make bricks without straw — to carry water without vessels — to hew wood without axes — to dig ditches without shovels — to kindle fire without wood. "Be ye also ready," God never asks the impossible. God never condones lethargy — never commends unpreparedness — never approves one's being unready for the cry at midnight. And God is ready to save and to make us ready to meet Him. "Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive." His readiness to forgive shows how possible it is for men to be ready to meet Him. His willingness and power to save show how quickly one can be prepared to meet Him. Is not this one truth found in Isaiah 27:5?

"Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me." Think, too, of Hosea 13:9:

"O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help."

We are not guilty of wasting words idly when we say it is the sinner's duty to get ready to meet God — to come to Christ. A sinner cannot neglect to come without incurring the guilt of willful disobedience and, we may add, the guilt of self-destruction. Think of a man shut in a house which is on fire. A door is thrown open by which he may make his escape. Is it not his duty to make his es-

cape by that door? Think of a person who has been poisoned. An effectual antidote is offered to him. Should he reject that antidote and die, is he not guilty of self-murder?

But it does seem a waste of words and an idle use of words when we say that it is for the sinner's best good that he come to Christ and be ready to meet God; for there is not a want in the sinner but there is a corresponding fullness in the Saviour, as it is written: "It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell." And again: "Of his fullness," says the apostle, "have all we received, and grace for grace." I repeat it, as Baker puts it, "There is not a want in the sinner but there is a corresponding fullness in our blessed Redeemer. Is the sinner hungry? Let him come to Christ, and he shall be made to partake of the Bread of Life. Is the sinner thirsty, let him come to Christ, and he shall be permitted to drink of the wells of salvation. Is the sinner sick? Let him come to Christ, and he shall have life and vigor infused into his soul. Is he naked? Let him come to Christ, and he shall receive a beautiful robe. Is he blind? Let him come to Christ, and he shall have his eyes opened to see wondrous things. Is he deaf? Let him come to Christ, and his ears shall be unstopped to hear the voice of uncreated harmony speaking peace to his happy soul. Is the sinner burdened? Let him come to Christ, and his burden shall be taken away. Is the sinner longing for rest? Let him come to Christ, and he shall have sweet repose. Is he trembling un-

der the apprehension of future wrath? Let him come to Christ, and he will find that 'there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ.'

"Being justified by faith, [the sinner shall] have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' No matter what be the sinner's wants, no matter what be the sinner's woes, Christ is suited to his case in all things. Therefore, let him come to Christ, and he shall be made rich and happy throughout all time and throughout all eternity."

Yes, it is possible to be ready. The testimonies of thousands of those saved so testify. Let us observe a few stars in this firmament of testimony — stars whose brightness the darkness of death can never obscure. Let us scrutinize a few flowers in this vast garden of testimony — fragrant flowers blooming just before the frost of death fell.

The great Apostle Paul, who compassed the earth with the truth of redemption and left a trail of glory across the Gentile world, said, "I am now ready to be offered." You can see Paul putting on robes and wings of ascension as he exclaims, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

"Throw back the shutters and let the sun in," said dying Scoville M'Collum.

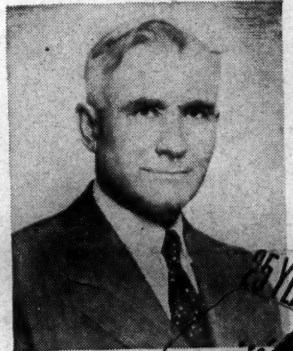
Hugh McKail went to one side of the scaffold of martyrdom and cried, "Farewell, sun, moon and stars! Farewell, all earthly delights!" Then he went to the other side of the scaffold and cried, "Welcome, God and Father! Welcome!"

(Continued on page 5)

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"Prepare to Meet Thy God"

(Continued from page 4)

come sweet Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the covenant! Welcome, death! Welcome, glory!"

A dying minister of Christ in Philadelphia said, in his last moments, "I move into light."

Joseph Addison, poet and essayist, made this statement: "See in what peace a Christian can die."

Beethoven the musician, who made surging seas of tone subservient to his rod, exclaimed, "I shall hear in heaven!"

Robert Bruce, the Scotch preacher, declared, "Children, I have breakfasted with you, and I shall sup with my Lord Jesus Christ."

John Bunyan, who, in jail, wrote a book that crawled beneath the bars of the jail and traveled hundreds of highways and knocked at tens of thousands of doors all over the world, said, "I go to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. My marks and scars I carry with me to show I have fought His battle well."

Jonathan Edwards, president of the College of New Jersey, declared, "Trust in God and you need not fear."

"Stonewall" Jackson said, "Let us go over the river and rest under the shade of the trees."

Longfellow, nine days before he died, wrote:

Out of the shadows of night
The world rolls into light;
It is daybreak everywhere.

Moody, who took one continent in one hand and one continent in another hand and both continents into his heart and rocked them both toward God, said, "I see earth receding; heaven is opening; God is calling me."

Frances Willard, the great American temperance advocate, exclaimed, "How beautiful to be with God."

My old black Mam Lindy said to the white people when she died in her little house: "My old worn out wooden wagon is changing to a chariot of gold."

Not one of these went down doubting. Not one went out fearing and shivering. Their victorious cry amid death's dark domain was: "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory." "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?"

V. Why Should Men Prepare To Meet God?

As well ask, "Why should a fish have water?" Or—"Why should the body have food?" Or—"Why should the lungs have air?" Or—"Why should the body require blood?" Or—"Why should a newborn babe have milk?" Or—"Why should one have clothes when the blizzard blows?" Or—"Why should the diseased have medicine?"

Why should men prepare to meet God? Because it is a preparation wise and essential and sensible. If it is sensible to attend to matters which relate to the body, is it not sensible also to attend to matters which relate to the soul? If it is wise to regard matters of time, is it not wise also to attend to matters of eternity? Diseases that waste human bodies are evidence that preparation for death or the coming of the Son of Man is the only sensibly reasonable and the only reasonably sensible action. Gray hairs give similar testimony. The lightning which snuffs out a life makes the same declaration. The hearse rolling its dreary way to the cemetery so testifies. The cemetery, with its white tombstones, so testifies. Ships that leave the harbor and go down into the deep tell us it is wise to be ready. Locomotives and trains wrecked and ruined so testify. Earthquakes that shake skyscrapers to pieces as though they were pieces of macaroni so testify. Fading eyes and fluttering hearts testify that the only sensible life is the life that obeys the injunction: "Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

Why prepare to meet God? Because in the unregenerate state men are unfit to meet God. "Ye must be born again." Can a blind man enjoy the beauties of a flower garden? Can a deaf man enjoy the music of an orchestra or choir?

Can a sick man enjoy the pleasures of a banquet? No. No more can the sinner without regeneration have any taste or relish for the employments and enjoyments of the heavenly world. There must be regeneration of the Holy Spirit in order to qualify us for heaven. Everything is holy there. Holy are the angels. Holy are the redeemed. Thrice holy is He who fills the throne. The unregenerate sinner would be miserable even within the precincts of the eternal city. The sinner must have his heart changed or he could not be happy even in heaven.

"He cannot enjoy the beauties of heaven, for he is spiritually blind; he cannot enjoy the music of heaven, for he is spiritually deaf; nor can he enjoy the pleasure of heaven for he is spiritually sick. The carnal mind is enmity against God, says the apostle; it is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be. How, then, can he who has this carnal mind (and this is the case of every unregenerate man) be happy in the divine presence? How can he be pleased with the songs of praise which are ever ascending? How can he be pleased in contemplating the perfections of one whom he loves not? How can he be pleased with that society for which he has no taste, or those employments for which he has no relish?"

Why prepare to meet God? Because you do not know when you will have to meet God. "In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Your breath is in God's hand, and God may stop that breath at any moment. "In the midst of life we are in death." In one of his books old Daniel Baker, dear to many hearts and dynamic in the pulpit, said: "And do you still say, 'There is time enough yet!?' Had you seen Mr. Loomis, of Bangor, ascend the pulpit on a certain New Year Sabbath, you would have thought it probable that he would ascend his pulpit many Sabbaths yet to come. Alas, he had entered it for the last time. He arose and took his text; it was this: 'This year thou shalt die.' He made a few remarks, turned pale, and sank down in his pulpit a lifeless corpse. His pulpit was his death chamber, and his preaching gown his winding sheet. 'Time enough yet!' If you had seen Judge Boling rise in the hall of the House of Representatives a few years ago, and address the Speaker, you might have expected him to make many more speeches in the hall of legislation; but, alas, he was then making his last speech. 'Mr. Speaker,' said he—and while he was addressing the chair, the angel of death touched him, and he fell down a dead man! 'Time enough yet!' If you had seen Colonel Bowie, some eighteen or twenty years since, enter a certain church in the city of Washington, you would little have thought that he had entered the church of God for the last time; but so it was. While the man of God in the pulpit was preaching to the people the unsearchable riches of Christ, all who were present heard a groan! It was his last. Colonel Bowie fell upon the floor and immediately expired! His friends gathered around and carried him out a dead man."

Sometimes the period of man's life is lengthened like a summer's day. Sometimes it is made short as a day in midwinter. Sometimes the sun of life goes down at noon, and sometimes early in the morning. Sometimes it reaches out like a river that loses itself in a very distant sea. Sometimes it appears like the meteor flashing and coruscating in the heavens, and

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then in a moment quenched and gone.

Our life contains one thousand springs,
And fails if one be gone;
Strange that a harp of thousand strings
Should keep in tune so long.

Why prepare to meet God? Because you must give an account to God.

"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."—Rom. 14:12.

"Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead."—1 Peter 4:5

Men may wickedly dethrone Him as King. Men may stubbornly refuse Him as Saviour. Men may ungratefully reject Him as Father. Men may defiantly deny Him as Saviour. Men may scorn Him as Friend. But they must meet Him as God—as God to whom the midnight is as the noon-day.

VI. How Not To Be Ready

Not by merely going to church. Not by merely saying your prayers. Not by having good intentions. Not by knowing all the questions and answers in the catechism. Not by reading a prayer book. Not by merely being baptized. Not by merely being confirmed. Not by merely going to the Lord's Supper. Not by merely having a list of good habits to your credit. Not by merely being a total abstainer.

(1) Not by NEGLECT can one be ready to meet God.

There is a question no philosopher can answer. There is a question a man one thousand times as wise as Solomon cannot answer. There is a question no scholar can answer. There is a question no writer with words dropping from his pen like golden pollen from the stems of shaken lilies can answer. There is a question no orator whose words are flights of golden arrows can answer. There is a question no historian familiar with all the questions and answers of the ages can answer. There is a question all the angels of heaven, taking counsel together, cannot answer. There is a question all the theologians of earth cannot answer. There is a question the Holy Spirit cannot answer. There is a question that Jesus cannot answer. There is a question that God cannot answer. And that question is: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. 2:3).

Neglect is as fatal as contempt. What but the neglect of precaution sent the *Titanic* down? What but neglect to build a strong dam breast caused the Johnstown flood? What but neglecting to set a lantern far enough away from a cow caused the Chicago fire?

For the man who neglects there is no possibility of rescue—and no reason that God will accept. Everything will plead against him. As Talmage says: "The waters will hiss from fountains, and say, 'We told him of the living stream where he might wash all his sins away, but he would not come. *Escape he must not!*' The rocks will say, 'We told him of a shelter and defense to which he might run and be saved; but he would not come. *Escape he must not!*' The sun in the sky will say, 'We told him of the light of the world and of the dayspring from on high; but he shut his eyes to the glory. *Escape he must not!*' The star will say, 'I pointed to his only hope—the Jesus of Bethlehem; but he would not look and be saved. *Escape he must not!*' The Bible will say, 'I called him by a thousand invitations, and warned him with a thousand alarms; but he would not heed; he would not listen. *Escape he must not!*' The tree of Calvary will say, 'On my bloody branch I bore the fruit that might have fed his starving soul; but he would not pluck it. *Escape he must not!*' The angels of God will say, 'We flew to him on errands of mercy, and would have charmed him into life; but he beat us back in our ministry. *Escape he must not!*' The throne of judgment will say, 'I have but two sentences to give—that to the friends of God and

that to His rejecters. *Escape he must not!* All the voices of the destroyed will speak out, and say, 'We neglected it no more than he. Why should he go free when we are banished? *Escape he must not!*' Jesus will say, 'I called to him for many years, but he turned his back on all these wounds; and by all those despised tears, and by that rejected blood, *escape he must not!*' Then God will speak, and answer the waters, and the rocks, and the sun, and the stars, and the Bible, and bloody tree, and the angels, and the thrones of judgment, and the voice of the destroyed, and the plea of a rejected Christ; and with a voice that shall ring all through the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths of His universe, say, 'ESCAPE HE SHALL NOT!'

(2) Not by PROCRASTINATION.

Pharaoh, while the terrible plagues devastated the land, said,

"Tomorrow." "And he said, 'Tomorrow'" (Exod. 8:10).

So it was with Felix, who under Paul's preaching, trembled but said, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." And so it is with thousands in the present day. Coleridge said:

So often do the spirits
Of great events stride on before
the events,
And it today already walks to-morrow.

Old John Gower said of a man: "And evermore he said, 'Tomorrow.'"

An old Latin writer declared: "Life put off until tomorrow is too late."

The wise man remembers this proverb: "When God says, 'Today,' the Devil says, 'Tomorrow.'" Shakespeare says:

(Continued on page 6)



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"Prepare to Meet Thy God"

(Continued from page 5)

Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death.

"To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." "Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what day may bring forth."

Tomorrow is a ship in which many have gone shipwreck. Tomorrow is a lamp without oil that has left many in darkness. Tomorrow is a guillotine that has beheaded hopes of heaven. Tomorrow is the key that has locked many in dungeons of despair. Tomorrow is the road that has often led to the House of Never. The spirit of tomorrow has been the ruin of millions.

(3) Not by EDUCATION

A man may know all that is to be known about rocks and know not the Rock of Ages. A man may know all that is to be known about the stars and see not in the light of the Bright and Morning Star. A man may know all that is to be known about trees and be ignorant in his heart of Him who "bare our sins in his own body on the tree." A man may know all that is to be known about the winds and himself be the victim of passions wilder than they. A man may know all about birds and refuse the refuge that is under the wings of God. A man may know the love affairs of great lovers and not be known as a lover of Jesus, the Lover of our souls. What folly if, in accumulating knowledge, we learn not of Jesus—and are not "filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that [we] might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power."

What profit if, in study, we find not God in His most glorious manifestations? If, at the end of the microscope's journey, we see not His infinitesimal care? If, in the findings of the telescope, we see not His infinite greatness? If, in our study of mathematics and the sciences, we learn not His immutable ways? If, in the fields of botany and in the kingdom of music, we glimpse not His ineffable beauty? If, scrutinizing the rocks of geology, we learn not the testimony of His incomprehensible agelessness? If, in amassing knowledge, we miss the spiritual meaning of a college education and have no enriching experience of Jesus?

All the degrees and scholastic honors of all the universities can never open heaven's gates for you. And all the Ph.D. degrees of earth cannot assure you exit from hell or make the fires of hell less intense. You may discard the "old-fashioned" notion of hell-fire. I do not. But the Bible in many places says that the suffering of hell is like fire. And if it is like fire, it is as severe as fire. And if it is as severe as fire, it might as well be fire. What wisdom will you show if you walk up and down the burning pavements of hell saying that you were valedictorian of your class or that you were high in scholastic rating or that you had all the degrees from all the colleges?

(4) Not by SKEPTICISM

"The land of skepticism is a desert whose sands are red-hot coals, swept by the smothering simoon of all-consuming wretchedness."

(5) Not by a plea of SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS.

"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags."—Isa. 64:6.

"There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness."—Prov. 30:12.

"Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."—Matt. 23:28.

(6) Not by reasoning about good works.

It is "not by works of righteousness which we have done."

"But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."—Titus 3:4-7.

(7) Not by making excuses

By making excuses about preparing to meet God, men excuse themselves from the great eternal hallelujah chorus of the redeemed—excuse themselves from the group of loved ones gone before—excuse themselves from the ineffable presence of the King of kings—excuse themselves from heaven where "the poorest man is a millionaire, the lowliest a king, and the tamest word he speaks an anthem, and the shortest life an eternity."

(8) Not by developing noble character.

People who say they will prepare to meet God by developing a noble character make a counterfeit out of character by passing it for more than it is worth. I never preached salvation by character, but I never preached a salvation that did not produce character.

(9) Not by the popular way of morality.

"You might as well try to mount a roof on a spider's web or cross the ocean in a market basket or climb the sky on a piano as try to reach heaven in your poor self-begotten, self-nurtured, self-centered morality." Paul says:

"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."—Phil. 3:7-9.

(10) Not by Refusing God's provisions.

All God's provisions for a man's salvation avail nothing for his preparation to meet God unless the provisions are taken. These provisions are the gift of God. A great gift is no gift unless it is accepted. A pardon is no pardon if it is refused.

In 1829 or 1830, George Wilson, in Pennsylvania, was sentenced by a United States Court in Philadelphia to be hanged for robbing the mails and murder. Andrew Jackson, as President of the United States, pardoned him, but Wilson refused the pardon and insisted that it was not a pardon unless he accepted it. That was a point in law never before raised in the United States of America. The Attorney-General said the law was silent on the point. The President was urged to call upon the Supreme Court to decide the point at once, as the sheriff must know whether to hang Wilson or not.

Chief Justice John Marshall, one of the ablest lawyers, gave the following decision: "A pardon is a paper, the value of which depends upon its acceptance by the person implicated. It is hardly to be supposed that one under sentence of death would refuse to accept a pardon, but if it is refused, it is no pardon. George Wilson must hang." And he was hanged.

Who was responsible for his death? No one but the man himself. The law said he must die. The President stepped between him and the law, but the man refused the pardon.

Indirectly, the Supreme Court of the United States decided that

the truth of the atonement of Christ in making provision for the salvation of the whole world is beneficial only to those who receive Him as their own personal Saviour. The righteousness of God is *unto* all in its offer, but it is *upon* them that believe in its benefit.

"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference." (Rom. 3:21-22).

VII. How Can We Prepare?

By repentance for sin and faith in Jesus Christ.

By believing.

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."—John 1:12.

"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."—John 3:18.

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."—John 3:36.

The one last, first, unvarying command of God to the sinner is *believe*. This does not mean merely belief that Jesus lives or lived, that He was divine and the best being in the world. All this you may believe and yet not really believe in Christ. True belief is the absolute, complete, final submission of your whole life to Christ for His merciful forgiveness and for His guidance, *by one supreme act of faith*. Your soul must say to Christ: "For once and for all, for time and for eternity, for joy and for sorrow, for life and for death, come weal or woe, by day and by night, forever and forever, I will trust Thee." To fail to do this is the one failure deadly as sin, the one failure long as eternity.

But by taking Jesus into your heart to be your Saviour, to rule and reign there, and by surrendering your whole heart and your whole life to Him, do you make preparation to meet God—do you get ready for the coming of the Son of Man—in such an hour as ye think not.

To say "Yes" means life; to say "No" means death. To say "Yes" means gladness; to say "No" means grief. To say "Yes" means heaven; to say "No" means hell. To say "Yes" means glory; to say "No" means gloom. Publicly confess your sin.

VIII. When Must We Prepare To Meet God?

There is but one answer—*now*. "Now is the accepted time." All things in your body, all things in nature, all things in the Bible, all workings of the Holy Spirit, all the uncertainties of life, all the certainties and terrors of death, all the statements of Christ about His coming again point to the momentous word *now*. "Prepare to meet thy God." And do so *now*. Hell is the only alternative—if you are not ready to meet God.

There is a time, we know not when,

A place we know not where,
Which marks the destiny of men
For rapture or despair.

Now! Not tomorrow, but today. Not when you have a more convenient season, but *now*. If today is the wise man's day, is not tomorrow the fool's day? Shakespeare said: "Defer no time; delays have dangerous ends. If we delay we waste our lights in vain—like lamps by day." Carlyle said: "No man has learned anything rightly until he knows and feels that every day is doomsday." Cotton said: "Tomorrow is a period nowhere to be found—unless in the fool's calendar. Wisdom disclaims the word, nor holds society with those who own it." Light rejected may become darkness.

Tillotson said: "To be always intending to live a new life, but never to find time to set about it

Why Christians Believe in Everlasting Punishment

(Continued from page 1)

strate the truth of this remark. The Protestant Episcopal church in this country and in England, while they reject our Presbyterian polity, declare their faith in this doctrine in unequivocal terms, every time they repeat the venerable Litany, which contains this solemn petition, "From wrath and everlasting damnation, good Lord deliver us." Do they play the hypocrite before God when they thus pray to Him? Certainly not. Does Canon Farrar use the Litany? We presume he does. On the other hand, the whole Methodist denomination, while they reject what are called Calvinistic doctrines, preach future punishment with their characteristic zeal.

Now, how do we account for this tenacity of belief in a doctrine so unpopular and so repulsive to the human heart? Shall we accept the popular explanation, and believe that the great body of theologians and Christian people in all ages have been so blinded and hardened by hatred towards their fellowmen that the thought of the perdition of others enhances the anticipation of their own blessedness? Does the strength of this doctrine consist in the *delight* it

affords those who hold it? We blush for those who make it when we repeat the suggestion that the great body of the fathers and of the reformers, the overwhelming majority of all who have ever preached the gospel since the days of the apostles—including the authors of the sweetest melodies that have ever embodied Christian love in songs, such as, "Jesus, thou joy of loving hearts;" "Rock of ages cleft for me;" "Jesus, lover of my soul;" "There is a fountain filled with blood";—that all these were monsters of cruelty, to whose hearts the thought of another's suffering brought exquisite pleasure. If this were true, then, indeed, would Christianity be a failure, and Nero, when he sought to stamp it out of the world, would be a model of virtue compared with its most honored saints. But let us have done with such senseless reviling; it is neither philosophic, nor charitable, nor truthful. As a joke, it is ghastly; as an argument, beneath contempt. They who believe the doctrine of future everlasting punishment are quite as loving in their spirit as they who reject it. The weakest of all ways to as-

(Continued on page 7)

—this is as if a man should put off eating and drinking and sleeping from one day and night to another, till he is starved and destroyed."

Napoleon, often called the arch-angel of war, was sitting in his camp one day, sad and dejected. Half of his army had been annihilated. Yet he did not know how the fortunes of the day were to end. Suddenly there came running into his camp an orderly who, with excitement and enthusiasm, said, "Cheer up, sir, you have gained the victory." And Napoleon said: "Yes, I have gained the victory, but another such victory would cost me my kingdom."

Men and women, some of you have gained the victory—haven't you? Victory over a Christian mothers' prayers! Victory over a Christian friend's counsel! Victory over the tears and entreaties of a Christian wife! Victory over the love of little children! Victory over the pleadings of some Gospel preacher! Victory over the warnings and invitations of God's Word! Victory over the wooing and convicting power of the tender, patient Spirit of God! Victory over the voice of God in conscience and providence! Victory over the fears of hell! Victory over the Cross of Christ! But if you win a few more such victories, I fear it will cost you your soul.

Therefore, I beg you to be done with excuses and alibis, which are but falsehoods, dishonesties, self-delusions.

Life is the season God has given To fly from hell and rise to heaven;

That day of grace fleets fast away,
And none its rapid course can stay.

Set yourself to seek the Lord while He may be found, and to settle the question of your salvation once for all. If not, the time may come, when you least expect it, when the death angel shall take his stand in front of your door and, lifting his hand to heaven, swear by the Christ who lives forever and ever that for you time shall be no more (Rev. 10:6). Then your opportunities will be clean gone forever. Therefore, again, I beg you strike your tents and start for Canaan. Quit studying that road map. Start. Put out the fires of your unworthy procrastination camp. Arise and go! Perhaps there are a thousand questions which you cannot answer now. But there is one question you can settle—independent of man, independent of woman, independent of angel, independent of devil. And that is that you will be God's man, God's woman, henceforth and forever. Clasp hands with God—*now*. Make a league with the eternities—*now*. Accept Him with all your doubts and all your sin—*now*.

Take Christ, and He will blot out all your sins—*now*. Here, at this very moment, He is waiting and pleading. Break with ignoble anchorage at Satan's wharf, and start out on the voyage of life, defying both calm and cyclone. Beyond the deadline there is no rectification of blunders. In the grave there is no place to pray or to repent. Those who flounder here flounder forever. I do not want you to fear death; I want you to be prepared for it. "Prepare to meet thy God . . . Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

(From the book, *BE YE ALSO READY*, published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids. Used by permission.)

The Editor's Invitation

Have you, dear sinner, read the above sermon by Dr. R. G. Lee? Surely you know that it would be wise and sensible to "prepare to meet thy God." All God requires is that you honestly repent of your sins and trust Jesus Christ who died for you, to forgive you and save you. Remember that Jesus said, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3:36). He said, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). I suggest that you read this sermon over again if you are not ready to make the decision. If you are ready, why don't you get down on your knees alone and confess to Christ that you are a sinner, that you need forgiveness, that you will here and now trust Him to forgive you and save you, that you will give Him your heart forever! If you will honestly, once and for all, turn from your sin and surrender to Christ. I beg you to tell Him so in your heart and then sign the following decision form. After signing it, will you copy it in a letter and send it to me? I will notify Dr. Lee so he can rejoice in your salvation. Then I will send you a letter of counsel and encouragement. Do it today!

Evangelist John R. Rice, Editor
THE SWORD OF THE LORD
214 West Wesley Street,
Wheaton, Illinois
Dear Brother Rice:

I have read Dr. R. G. Lee's sermon, "Prepare to Meet Thy God." I resolve today to prepare to meet God. With this in mind, I humbly confess to Him my sins and turn my heart from them. I ask Jesus Christ to forgive me and save me. Here and now I surrender to Him, I trust Him to forgive me, I give Him my heart forever. By God's grace I will try to live for Him sincerely, beginning this very day and will claim Him as my Saviour.

Signed _____
Address _____
Address _____

Why Christians Believe in Everlasting Punishment

(Continued from page 6)

sail a doctrine is to impeach the motives and traduce the character of those who hold it. It is no comfort to us to think with Paul, that, after having preached to others, we ourselves "may be a cast-away," or that any to whom we have preached may "fail of the grace of God."

Why, then, do we not all agree to reject the doctrine of future punishment and abolish it forever from our creed? There are two obstacles in the way, two insurmountable facts, which account for the prevalence of the doctrine, and make it just as impossible to eliminate it from Christian belief as it is to vote pain out of the world, or to abolish poverty and sickness by acts of Congress.

In the first place the doctrine of future and everlasting punishment is in accordance with the suggestions of the human conscience, and with the constitution and course of nature which all Christians call divine Providence. Forebodings of wrath to come are as instinctive and as universal among men as a belief in God and in the immortality of the soul. It is a doctrine of natural as well as of revealed religion, and it is abundantly confirmed by the analogies between the two. It is not peculiar to the Christian system; it lies at the basis of all religion.

If men suffer—and suffer remedilessly for sin in this life, under the government of a merciful and holy God, no satisfactory reason can be assigned why they may not so suffer in another state of existence, and in the face of existing facts, no speculation of uninspired men can argue out of the human soul those forebodings of wrath to come which the gospel so far from removing, has only confirmed in the great majority of those who accept it. Every argument against these natural forebodings founded upon an appeal to the divine attributes, is equally good against the very existence of the divine government over this world; and if carried out to its logical conclusion must lead to the denial of the being of God. It is very easy to beg the question in dispute by passionate appeals to God's justice and benevolence. The question to be decided is, "What in God's judgment, who alone is competent to decide, will be the just doom for incorrigible sinners?"

And the only answer to that question, aside from Scripture, is found in what He does in this world, and what the accusing conscience forebodes that He will do in the next. Abraham once asked, in a very different spirit from those who quote his words, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" And the answer was not what the patriarch pleaded for, but the storm of fire and brimstone that blotted out the doomed cities of the plain. And this appeal to natural justice as against the everlasting punishment of the wicked is still more grossly inconsistent with the very idea of such a remedial system as the gospel. "If it be inconsistent with divine justice that men should perish for their sins, then redemption is not a matter of grace or undeserved mercy. Deliverance from an unjust penalty is a matter of justice. Nothing, however, is plainer from the teaching of Scripture, and nothing is more universally and joyfully acknowledged by all Christians than that the whole plan of redemption—the mission, the incarnation and the death of the Son of God for the salvation of sinners—is a wonderful exhibition of the love of God which passes knowledge. But if justice demand that all men shall be saved, then salvation is a matter of justice; and all the songs of gratitude and praise from the redeemed, whether in Heaven or on earth, ought at once to cease."—Hodge.

And you will readily see that the question of justice is not in anywise affected by the number of the lost. Nor is the appeal to divine benevolence more logical or conclusive. As the question of

numbers is especially irrelevant when applied to the justice, so the question of time or duration is irrelevant as regards benevolence. If God's benevolence necessitates the ultimate and complete happiness of all, that necessity is just as binding now as it ever will be; for the whole argument is based upon the assumption that God's benevolence, being infinite, must have an infinite expression—in other words, that He must make all men as happy as they can be. But we know that all men are not happy here; nay, we know that no man is as happy as he is capable of being. If it be answered that God cannot make all men perfectly blessed here consistently with His own perfections and with the interests of the universe, and with the very nature of the human soul, that nullifies the whole argument; for who beside God Himself is competent to say that the same conditions may not limit the exercise of infinite benevolence in a future state? So that the consideration of the moral attributes of God as they are illustrated in His providence over this world, instead of overturning the doctrine of future punishment, is, in fact, one strong reason why it has always been believed.

The second reason why the doctrine of future punishment has been so universally and tenaciously held is found in the teaching of Scripture, and especially in the recorded instructions of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is very remarkable that all the strongest expressions in which the common belief in future punishment is embodied, or by which it is illustrated—all the expressions which are most frequently ridiculed and reviled by unbelievers—fell originally from the lips of Christ Himself. Whatever "the worm that dieth not" and "the fire that is not quenched" may signify—whatever is meant by being "bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth"—these and many similar expressions descriptive of the destiny of men after death are not the inventions of theologians, but the two-edged words of Him who spoke as never man spake. It was He who related the story of a certain rich man who lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and begged in vain for a drop of water to cool his tongue. Five times in one discourse, when exhorting us to self-denial which He declares to be necessary to salvation, He enforces His precepts by warning us that we are in danger of being cast into Hell fire, into the fire that is not quenched, where their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched. Does any one say this is horrible? So we think it is. But it was the loving and compassionate Saviour who said it.

And now, when men rail at His ministers as cruel and malignant, and delighting in human suffering, because they simply repeat His words, we repel the accusation, not as against ourselves, but as well-suited to dishonor and vilify the character of Jesus Christ. We do not impute to them any such purpose. But when they denounce Augustine, and Calvin, and the Reformers, and the Puritan fathers for receiving and repeating these words of Christ, we feel sure that their censures, in the apprehension of impenitent and unbelieving men, pass over from the servants at whom they are aimed and wound the Master in the house of His friend.

Nor can the force of this observation be evaded by the assertion that it is not the words of Christ against which these railing accusations are brought, but only the interpretation which theologians have put upon them. For it is further remarkable that the doctrine of future punishment, as held and taught by the Christian church in all ages, does not and never has consisted in the interpretation of these expressions of the Saviour. Even the Roman Catholic church has never undertaken, by the decree of any coun-

cil, to decide whether the fire unquenchable is to be literally or figuratively understood. And there is not a Protestant creed in Christendom which insists upon a material Hell, or upon a literal acceptance of the Saviour's words descriptive of future punishment. All the church and its creeds have ever insisted upon is that the words of Jesus Christ are true, and were truthfully uttered; that they represent not a fiction, but a reality; and that He uttered them to give a faithful warning to all generations of men concerning a real danger to which they are exposed. Doubtless there has been a vast deal of wild speculation among theologians and preachers of every name. But all this has nothing to do with the essence of Christian faith. No formulated creed, and, so far as we know, no theologian of acknowledged repute, has ever undertaken to decide whether the words of Christ about the Gehenna fire, which is not quenched, are to be received literally, or only as the symbols of a mere profound spiritual reality. The absolute and everlasting truth of His teaching on this subject is not involved in this question of interpretation; nor would that truth be a whit less terrible to any thoughtful mind if we knew for a certainty that the quenchless flame is nothing more than the burning of perpetual remorse in the chambers of the lost soul itself. Among those who have insisted most earnestly upon this interpretation are to be found some of the ablest and most orthodox expounders of both Roman Catholic and Protestant theology.

Further than this, it is remarkable that in the judgment of the Christian church, as expressed in its creeds and in the preaching of its ablest ministers, the doctrine of future punishment has never been based exclusively upon those peculiar expressions of the Saviour. It does not rest upon any set of words or phrases, nor upon a few isolated texts, but upon the broad declarations, and especially upon the underlying assumptions, of the whole Scripture. And because this doctrine is thus interwoven with the whole gospel it is so tenaciously held by Christians. This will account for what may be regarded as the intemperate zeal with which some have defended it. When men seem to advocate and defend future punishment as though their happiness depended upon the belief that others must perish, if you could look into their hearts you would see that it is the integrity of their Saviour and the truth of the sweet promises of the gospel that they are vindicating.

If He is not to be believed when He threatens everlasting punishment, neither is He trustworthy when He promises everlasting life, for the two things are spoken of in the same sentence, and their duration is described by the same word; as, for example, in the description of the judgment in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew. And it is not by single words or sentences, but by the whole drift and tone of His teaching, that the doctrine is fastened upon the experimental belief of the soul.

Suppose we admit that the word Hell is never used in the New Testament in connection with the idea of punishment, that it means only and always the general state of the dead as distinguished from the living, and that there is no other single word which definitely describes either a state or a place of future punishment; suppose we admit, also, that the word damnation ought to be translated condemnation always, as it is sometimes, and that the latter word has a meaning entirely different from the former; suppose, further, we concede that the word *aiōnios* does not mean everlasting; that there is no word in the Greek language to express the idea of endless duration; that the idea was unknown to the human mind in the days of Christ, and, consequently, that there is nothing in the Bible to assure us that Heaven is everlasting, or that Jehovah is the Eternal God—suppose, I say, we concede all these monstrous assumptions, which have lately been put forth so dogmatically and with such an ostentation of profound scholarship; and to crown all these assumptions with one

still more monstrous, let us suppose that the proposed new translation of the Bible will fully endorse all these new interpretations and abolish the three obnoxious words, *Hell*, *damnation* and *everlasting*, from the Holy Scriptures: what then? Have you eliminated the doctrine of everlasting future punishment from the Bible, and especially from the teaching of Jesus Christ? Why, no! What will you do, for example with the Saviour's Great Commission to His disciples: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature: he that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned?"

Now substitute the word "condemned" for "damned"; nay, to make the point still clearer, strike out the whole clause in which it stands, and let the only sanction to the Great Commission be, "He that believeth shall be saved." Does that mean he that believeth not shall be saved? Did the Saviour know at the time He gave this Great Commission that ultimately it will make little difference to men whether they hear and believe the gospel or not? How, then, can we receive Jesus Christ as an infallible, or even as a truthful, teacher? It must be obvious to every candid mind that what is assumed in that Commission is an essential part of His teaching. And the same course of observation applies to all His exceeding great and precious promises and invitations.

When He says, "Come unto me, ye weary and heavy laden; take my yoke on you, and learn of me, and ye shall find rest to your souls," does He mean that they who do not come to Him shall find rest the same as they who do?

When He stands and weeps over Jerusalem and laments that they would not be gathered to Him, and declares that now the day of their merciful visitation is past, does He see beyond the few days of bloody conflict, in which Jerusalem will be destroyed and her children slaughtered in her streets, a Heaven of perpetual joy and felicity into which they will all be gathered home?

When He signifies to Peter by what death He shall glorify God, He sheds no tears and utters no lamentations. And can we believe that the anticipation of the crucifixion of one of His own apostles excited less emotion in the Saviour's soul than the prophetic vision of similar sufferings on the part of His enemies? Surely the desolation of their house, and the hiding of the things which belonged to their peace, and the passing away of the day in which these things could be known, are associated in His mind with something more than the Roman sword or the Roman cross. Those tears over apostate Jerusalem are more terrible in their significance than His warnings about the undying worm and the quenchless fire.

But let us turn from these general considerations of the underlying assumptions of Christ's teaching to the most specific declarations of our text. As a prophet, the Saviour is looking into the future and declaring that which shall be hereafter. He says nothing here directly of Hell, of condemnation, or of everlasting punishment; but in language most profound and comprehensive, "Ye shall die in your sins; whither I go ye cannot come." The two propositions are parallel and co-extensive. They stand in the relation of cause and effect.

To die in one's sins is to die unforgiven. If forgiveness were a mere sovereign and arbitrary act of divine mercy, performed by God without regard to the sinner's moral state or to the claims of His own holy law, the thought of dying unforgiven would not be so dreadful. But all Christians agree that forgiveness is not a mere arbitrary exercise of mercy, which can be put forth at any time and without regard to the sinner's attitude toward God. It is an act of justice no less than of mercy. It is based on the satisfaction Christ rendered to the divine law in behalf of them who believe. It is inseparably connected with faith. The Saviour expounds the text with the further declaration, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." And to die in sin is to die under the condemnation of the divine law.

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Moreover, to die in sin is to die with its uncleanness and its bitter recollection clinging to the soul. The words which Christ puts into the mouth of Abraham in the conversation with the rich man, "lifting up his eyes in torment," strike the key-note of all weeping and wailing. "Son, remember!" that remembrance with its bitter remorse may constitute in the next world, as it so often does in this, the chief ingredient in the misery of sin. But whatever may be the form or mode of future punishment, it is always based upon and accurately proportioned to the ill-desert of human sin. And now I declare to you that the uniform belief not only of the great teachers, Augustine and Calvin, but of all who hold the doctrine of future punishment—whether Catholic or Protestant, whether Calvinistic or Arminian—is this: that men are punished in the future world *simply and solely for their personal ill-desert*, or, as the text says, because they die in their sins.

What will be the consequence thus dying in sin? Manifestly, unforgiven sin in its condemnation and pollution will adhere to the soul as long as the soul exists, unless there is in the future world some process more effectual for its removal than any to which it has been subjected in this life. Is there such a future redemption? In other words, is there any foundation for the theory of the restoration of the wicked? This theory rests upon one of two hypotheses.

The first is, that punishment itself will bring the sinner to repentance and reformation; that this is the only end for which it can be justly inflicted, and that when this end is accomplished the punishment will necessarily cease. The objections to this are obvious and insurmountable. (1) It is contrary to all human experience. When was a child made good merely by whipping, or a prisoner reformed simply by bonds and imprisonment? (2) It is entirely without Scripture foundation. Where is there a single text to support it? (3) It involves the manifest absurdity that punishment is no longer deserved, and can no longer be inflicted when the reformation of the sinner becomes hopeless; so that, in order to escape from divine judgment, a man has only to make himself as bad as he can be. (4) And, above all, it dishonors the method of salvation revealed in the gospel. If divine punishment shall prove more effectual than divine love—what then becomes of the apostle's assertion that the gospel of Christ is "the power of God unto salvation"?

The second hypothesis upon which the theory of restoration rests is in itself far less objectionable; it supposes that the gospel will be preached in the next world to those who have not heard it, or who, having heard, have rejected it in this; and it is assumed that under their changed circumstances, all who have died in their sins will accept the new offer of salvation through faith in Christ. If this could be shown to be true, there is no human heart—certainly no Christian heart—which would not embrace it with joy unspeakable. Our objection to the hypothesis is that it is a mere hypothesis. Certainly our Lord Jesus Christ never taught any such doctrine; nor is there in His recorded teaching a single sentence from which any one has ever pretended to derive the confirmation of it.

This admitted silence of the Saviour is sufficient to condemn

(Continued on page 8)

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With the Evangelists

Reports From America's Outstanding Soul Winners

By the Editor

Dr. Hyman Appelman in Fresno, California

Dr. Hyman Appelman and song leader, Homer Britton, had a blessed four weeks' revival campaign in Fresno, California, October 10—November 6. Thirty-four churches cooperated. Services were in the City Auditorium seating 3,000. The chairman reported that over 1,200 persons went through the prayer room for various decisions—conversion, reclamation and church membership. Dr. Appelman has contracted for a weekly half hour radio broadcast on Radio Luxembourg in Europe beginning in February.

Dr. Merv Rosell in Spokane, Washington

Evangelist Clay Cooper, Director Youth for Christ, Spokane, tells of a blessed city-wide revival held by Dr. Merv Rosell, with over 250 first-time decisions for Christ. Cliff and Billy Barrows helped in the music. Cooperation and results are reported the best in many years.

Evangelist G. P. Comer Reports Revivals

Evangelist G. P. Comer of Dallas, Texas, recently held revival services with the First Methodist Church in Russell Springs, Kentucky, with between fifty and sixty conversions and reclamations. Many family altars were pledged, according to the pastor.

At the Centenary Methodist Church, Murphysboro, Illinois, Brother Comer saw fifty public conversions and reclamations, according to the report of the church committee sent THE SWORD OF THE LORD, with forty-three family altars begun,

nineteen new tithers. The committee calls it "the most gracious revival in twenty years."

Brother Comer is a Methodist evangelist; address, Box 5889, Dallas 2, Texas.

Evangelist Tom Fair Has Fifteen Campaigns Scheduled for 1950

We are glad to have a good letter from Evangelist Tom C. Fair of 2726 S. E. 118th Avenue, Portland 66, Oregon, and song director Paul Coulombe. They have fifteen revival efforts scheduled already for the year in western states. Many have been saved through these services in the past year.

Many Echoes of Billy Graham Campaign in Los Angeles

From far and near come words of gratitude to God for the blessed revival given Los Angeles under the leading of Dr. Billy Graham, President Northwestern Schools, with song leader Cliff Barrows. The campaign ran eight weeks. Three thousand people claimed Christ as personal Saviour. Some three thousand others made some definite decision. Beverly Shea did solo work continually. Irwin W. Moon supervised the prayer room.

Pastor Commends Evangelist G. Robert Stacey

A fine letter from J. Dwight Wadsworth of the Emmanuel Church, Burbank, California commends Evangelist G. Robert Stacey who held revival services in the Emmanuel Church. Brother Stacey is a fearless Bible preacher, humble and gifted, commended by Youth for Christ and had some blessed permanent results.

Why Christians Believe in Everlasting Punishment

(Continued from page 7)

the whole theory; for it compels the advocates of such human speculation to assume a superiority either of wisdom or of kindness to the Son of God. He never taught such a doctrine; but they vindicate the character and government of God by supplementing His defective teaching with a theory of their own.

But the silence of the Saviour is not all. He used words and uttered warnings and drew pictures utterly inconsistent with the supposition that He believed there would be another probation in the world to come; and that, too, under circumstances where, if He had entertained any such views, common honesty and human kindness would have compelled Him to avow them.

For example, take His answer to the question which agitated men's minds in His day just as it does now—the question, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" (Luke 13:23). Here was a grand opportunity for the full exposition of the truth—for the comfort of anxious inquirers in all time to come. How did He answer? His answer is in these solemn and plain words:

"Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not, whence ye are: then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are: depart from me all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out."

This answer must be taken in its connection and in its completeness. It will not do to break it into fragments and select what suits our theory. Here is no intimation that the gospel will be preached over again in the next world in order to persuade those who have rejected it here to accept it there. True, Jesus did not consent to gratify human curiosity in regard to the numbers of the saved or of the lost. But He did propose then, as always, to teach all who came to Him whatever is necessary for their salvation and their comfort. But He declared that after the probation of the present day of salvation is ended *they who seek to enter in shall not be able*. Why? Because the Master of the house has risen up and shut to the door.

"The figure is the usual one of a feast, at which the householder entertains the members of his family. These being assembled, he rises and shuts the door, and none are afterward admitted."—*Alford*.

Nor is this prophecy of the future lightened or altered in any wise by those parables in which the same figure of a feast is employed to represent the provisions, the purposes and the final results of the gospel in its broadest applications. One of them concludes with the unqualified declaration, "I say unto you that none of those men which were bidden (and had refused) shall taste of my supper." In another, a man who had come in without the wedding garment is "bound hand and foot and taken away and cast into outer darkness." Now, we ask again, could the Saviour have used such language if the gospel is to be preached over again in the next world to those who have rejected it in this?

Or take the picture of eternity which He painted in such lurid colors in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man. What did He mean by the statement which He puts in Abraham's lips, "Between

us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us that would come from thence"? Is such language consistent with the supposition that He knew all the while there would be a going down of gospel messages and invitations from Heaven to those who die in their sins—a restoration of the lost to all the opportunities and joys of salvation?

Or take the plain words of our text: "*Whither I go ye cannot come.*" We know whither He has gone. And before He goes He says to the unbelievers around Him, and to all who shall die in their sins, "*thither ye cannot come.*" Did He mean only that they could not come for the present? Why then did He not say so? It would have been so easy, and so honest, and so kind to tell the whole truth in the premises. He did say to one of His disciples, "*Whither I go thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards.*" But to those who die in their sins He says emphatically and without any qualification, "*Whither I go ye cannot come.*"

If others turn away from Him

because of these hard doctrines, we will only come nearer and say more lovingly, "Lord, to whom can we go? Thou only hast the words of eternal life." God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; it was condemned already. The foreboding of wrath to come which He formulated into the doctrine of future punishment is not the gospel; it is only the dark background of natural religion on which the gospel is projected; and we cling to it, not only because it is the dictate of the human conscience and the common sense of mankind, but because He who is the light of the world has inseparably connected it with the sweetest promises of His grace and glory.

All orthodox preachers in Europe and America, and all their predecessors from the days of Augustine and of Paul, agree "that the vast majority of the lost will be found." In fact, all orthodox preachers not only *hope*, but are firmly persuaded, that "where sin abounds grace will much more abound," and that the great majority of mankind will be saved. The salvation of all who die in infancy has, from the beginning, kept

the majority on the side of Christ and Heaven: and that majority will be unspeakably increased in the days of millennial glory. Why even Jonathan Edwards, whose discourses contain the most terrific, and, we are willing to add, the most unwarrantable descriptions of future punishment, insists that the finally lost will bear no larger proportion to the saved than the inmates of a prison to the population of an empire. He represents the fewness of their numbers one element of their punishment.

But now, what have we to do with the numbering of the lost or the saved? We are told that the saved will be "a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and kindred and people and tongues." Let us see to it that we and all we can influence are among that blessed multitude. Our business is to strive that we may enter in. Let us not die in our sins, through want of faith in Jesus Christ, and so be excluded from the place and the state whither He has gone. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life."

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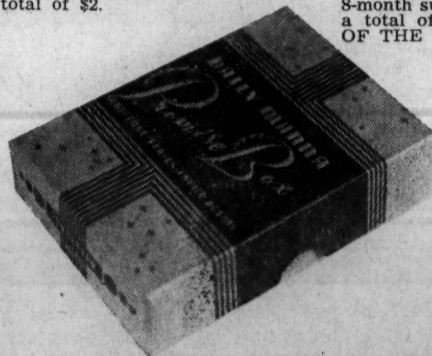
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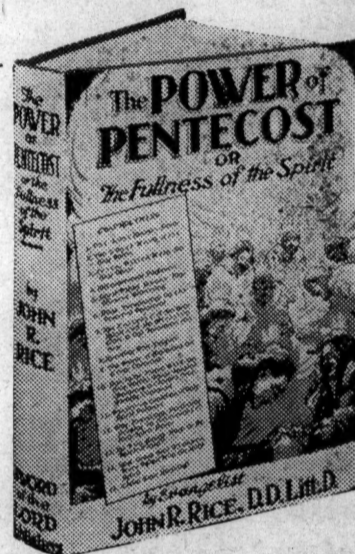


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